



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the College on 85990500 and ask to speak to your child's Year Level Leader who can arrange an interpreter. Information regarding Child Safe Standards in languages other than English can be found <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards/translated-resources-about-the-child-safe-standards/>

## 1. Purpose & Rationale

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, students or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school. In some limited instances, we may need to refer the complainant to another policy or area if there are difference processes in place to manage the issue including:

- Complaints and concerns relating to fraud and corruption will be managed in accordance with the department's [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
- Criminal matters will be referred to Victorian Police
- Legal claims will be referred to the Department's Legal Division
- Complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures [e there are

## 2. Policy Goals

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide an outline of the complaints process at Sandringham College so that students, parents and members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- Ensure that all complaints and concerns regarding Sandringham College are managed in timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

## 3. Implementation

Sandringham College welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication with our families and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning.

We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of students for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- be considerate of each other's views and respect each other's role
- be focused on resolution of the complaint, with the interests of the student involved at the centre
- act in good faith and cooperation
- behave with respect and courtesy

- respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate
- operate within and seek reasonable resolutions that comply with any applicable legislation and Department policy.
- recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Under the Child Safe Standards, schools are required to have a complaint handling policy that clearly outlines the process for making a complaint. This includes complaints from both students and parents

### 3.1. Complaints and Concerns process for students

Sandringham College acknowledges that issues or concerns can cause stress or worry for students and impact their wellbeing and learning. Sandringham College encourages our students to raise issues or concerns as they arise so that we can work together to resolve them.

Students with a concern or complaint can raise them with a trusted adult at school, for example, with your Campus Principal, Assistant Principal, classroom teacher, Year Level Leaders, Wellbeing staff, Koorie Education Support Officers, Education Support staff. This person will take your concern or complaint seriously and will explain to you what steps we can take to try to resolve the issue and support you.

You can also ask your parent, carer or another trusted adult outside of the school, to talk to us about the issue instead. Information about our parent/carer complaints and concerns process is outlined further below. The parent/carer process also applies to students who are mature minors, refer to: [Mature Minors and Decision Making](#).

Other ways you can raise a concern or complaint with us include:

- talking to a student leader about your concern and any suggestions you have for resolving it
- participating in our Attitudes to School Survey
- participating in our student forums
- writing a note for our anonymous student suggestions box in each school library

Further information and resources to support students to raise issues or concerns are available at:

- [Report Racism Hotline](#) (call 1800 722 476) – this hotline enables students to report concerns relating to racism or religious discrimination
- [Reach Out](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#) (call 1800 55 1800)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association](#) (VAEAI)

### 3.2. Preparation for raising a concern or complaint

Sandringham College encourages parents, carers or members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to

- Carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss
- Remember that you may not have all the facts relating to the issue you wish to raise
- Think about how the matter could be resolved
- Be informed and check the policies and guidelines set by the Department and Sandringham College (see References Section below)

### 3.3. Complaints process

Sandringham College is always happy to discuss with parents/carers and community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to the relevant Year Level Leader. Note that formal complaints should be directed to a member of the College leadership team, either the Campus Principal or College Principal.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

**Complaint received:** Please either email, telephone or arrange a meeting through the front office with the Campus Principal to outline your complaint so that we can fully understand what the issues are. We can discuss your complaint in a way that is convenient for you, whether in writing, in person or over the phone.

**Information gathering:** Depending on the issues raised in the complaint, the Campus Principal may need to gather further information to properly understand the situation. This process may also involve speaking to others to obtain details about the situation or the concerns raised.

**Response:** Where possible, a resolution meeting will be arranged with the Campus Principal to discuss the complaint with the objective of reaching a resolution satisfactory to all parties. If after the resolution meeting we are unable to resolve the complaint together, we will work with you to produce a written summary of the complaint in the event you would like to take further action about it. In some circumstances, the College Principal may determine that a resolution meeting would not be appropriate. In this situation, a response to the complaint will be provided in writing.

**Timelines:** Sandringham College will acknowledge receipt of your complaint as soon as possible (usually within 48 hours) and will seek to resolve complaints in a timely manner. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, Sandringham College may need some time to gather enough information to fully understand the circumstances of your complaint. We will endeavour to complete any necessary information gathering and hold a resolution meeting where appropriate within 10 working days of the complaint being raised. In situations where further time is required, Sandringham College will consult with you and discuss any interim solutions to the dispute that can be put in place.

Please note that unreasonable conduct (eg. Vexatious complaints) may need to be managed differently to the procedures in this policy.

### 3.4. Resolution

Where appropriate, Sandringham College may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- an apology or expression of regret
- a change of decision
- a change of policy, procedure or practice
- offering the opportunity for student counselling or other support
- other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the student, parent and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Sandringham College may also ask you to attend a meeting with an independent third party or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.

### 3.5. Escalation

If a parent or community member is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved by the school, or if their complaint is about the Principal and you do not want to raise it with them, then the complaint should be referred to the Department of Education South East Victoria Region. Call 1800 338 738 or email [sevr@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:sevr@education.vic.gov.au)

Sandringham College may also refer a complaint to SEV Regional Office if we believe that we have done all we can to address the complaint.

For more information about the Department's Parent Complaints policy, including the role of the Regional Office, please see: [Parent complaints policy](#).

### 3.6. Record Keeping and Other Requirements

To meet Department and legal requirements, our school must keep written records of:

- Serious, substantial or unusual complaints
- Complaints relating to the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, to meet regulatory requirements - refer to Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes for further information

Our school also follows Department policy to ensure that record-keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns

## 4. Monitoring & Review

This policy was last updated September 2022.. Please refer to the Sandringham Policy Schedule for the next review date.

## 5. Definitions

DET – Department of Education and Training

## 6. References

The following school policies are also relevant to this policy:

School Policy and Advisory Guide (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au>)

Sandringham College Communication with School Staff Policy

Sandringham College Statement of Values and School Philosophy

The Department's parents' website:

- [Raise a complaint or concern about your school](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)

Policy Number	SC-OP-11	Last Approval Date	September 2022
Policy Owner	Sandringham College	Approved By	School Council
Policy Reviewer	Principal Team	Next Review Date	September 2024
Review Frequency	Document Availability	Policy Delivery	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Years <input type="checkbox"/> As Required <input type="checkbox"/> n/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> College Website <input type="checkbox"/> Student Compass <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parent Compass <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff Compass <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Information Drive <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolment Pack	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Staff Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Parent Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Student Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Annual School Assembly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff Handbook/Manual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> College Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Staff DL	